



**Request for City Council Committee Action
From the City Attorney's Office**

Date: April 8, 2002
To: Public Safety & Regulatory Services Committee
Referral to: Ways & Means/Budget Committee

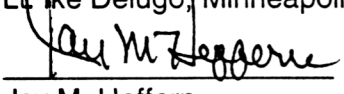
Subject: Request for authority to jointly apply for a continuation grant of the existing Violence Against Women Act Grant Award from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety: a joint project between the Minneapolis City Attorney's Office, the Police Department and the Domestic Abuse Project.

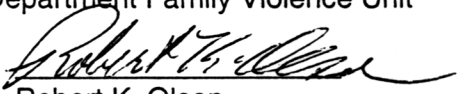
Recommendation: That the City Council authorizes the City Attorney and Chief of Police to apply for a continuation of the existing grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Crime Victim Services.

Previous Directives:

Prepared by: Joan C. Peterson, Deputy City Attorney, Criminal Phone: 673-2861
Lt. Mike Delugo, Minneapolis Police Department Family Violence Unit

Approved by:


Jay M. Heffern
City Attorney


Robert K. Olson
Chief of Police

Presenter in Committee: Jay M. Heffern, City Attorney

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

- ☒ No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.
(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)
☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget
☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget
☐ Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase
☐ Action requires use of contingency or reserves
☐ Other financial impact (Explain):
☐ Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Community Impact:

City Goals: Build Community

Background/Supporting Information:

In July, 2001, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety awarded a \$66,482.00 grant to the City of Minneapolis to enhance the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence crime.

The purpose of this grant is to improve Minneapolis' response to domestic violence cases by providing victim safety/offender risk assessments, evaluating cases for enhanced investigation and prosecution, and providing advocacy services to victims. This response has been provided by a team consisting of police department investigators, a domestic violence prosecutor, and a victim advocate. The domestic violence prosecutor and the advocate from the Domestic Abuse Project have been working in the MPD Family Violence Unit since September of 2001.

The prosecutor assigned to the Family Violence Unit has assisted officers in identifying cases for investigation priority where the victim is at high risk. Each morning, the prosecutor reviews reports from all domestic violence incidents that occurred within the previous 24 hours (or 48 over a weekend). The prosecutor then conducts an immediate assessment of the cases to determine what additional evidence might be required to prosecute the case. If the case is a potential felony, the prosecutor works with the Family Violence Unit investigator to identify the information necessary for a felony charge. The Assistant City Attorney has reviewed over 100 reports that were potential felony-level cases. If that evidence is gathered, the Assistant City Attorney prepares charges. The Hennepin County Attorney's Office cross-deputized the Assistant City Attorney for purposes of charging these felony-level cases.

This program has been very successful in speeding up the time it takes for a case to receive felony review and charging. In the past, precious time was lost while a case passed through the referral process between the City and County Attorney's Offices. As a result, high-risk domestic violence cases are being handled more quickly and effectively than in the past. In order to provide victim support, the City Attorney's Office contracted with the Minneapolis Domestic Abuse Project for an advocate. The advocate conducts a risk assessment with every victim and assists with victims' safety needs. In addition, the DAP advocate assists the police investigators in contacting victims and has accompanied the police investigators to victim interviews. Many victims are willing to talk to the police when the advocate is present. The combination of the resources input of the prosecutor and the enhanced assess to victims provided the DAP advocate have resulted in cases being charged as felonies would not likely have been so charged under previous procedures.

Because this grant has provided significant benefits in the handling of domestic violence cases, the City Attorney's Office and the Police Department seek to have the grant renewed in order to continue this valuable work.